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General Committee

Summary record of the 1st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 12 September 2006, at 11 a.m.

Chairman: Ms. Al Khalifa (President of the General Assembly) ..... **(Bahrain)**

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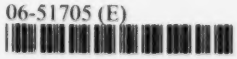

The meeting was called to order at 11.30 a.m.

Organization of the sixty-first regular session of the General Assembly, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items (A/BUR/61/1 and Add.1)

Memorandum by the Secretary-General

1. **The Chairman** drew attention to the memorandum by the Secretary-General regarding the organization of the sixty-first regular session of the General Assembly, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items (A/BUR/61/1 and Add.1).

II. Organization of the session

2. **The Chairman** drew the Committee's attention to paragraph 6 of the Secretary-General's memorandum and said that she trusted that she would shortly receive from each of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly a letter concerning the designation of a liaison person for the duration of the session.

3. *The Committee took note of all the relevant information contained in chapter II of the memorandum. It decided to draw to the attention of the General Assembly all the necessary information and to recommend to the General Assembly that it should take action on all the proposals contained in that chapter.*

4. *The Committee also decided to recommend to the General Assembly that it should take note of the information contained in paragraph 41 of the memorandum on the views of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the use of the phrase "within available resources" and the Advisory Committee's views on the responsibility of the Secretariat to inform the General Assembly regarding the availability of resources to implement a new activity.*

III. Observations on the organization of the work of the General Assembly

5. *The Committee decided to bring to the attention of the General Assembly the information contained in chapter III of the memorandum.*

IV. Adoption of the agenda

6. **The Chairman** informed the Committee that, in accordance with paragraph 2 (a) of the annex to General Assembly resolution 58/316, the draft agenda was organized under headings corresponding to the priorities of the Organization as contained in the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005, and the priorities of the Organization for the period 2006-2007 as set out in paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 59/278.

Paragraphs 49-51

7. *The Committee took note of the information contained in paragraphs 49 to 51 of the memorandum.*

Inclusion of items

8. **The Chairman** said that, since the agenda was now organized under nine headings, the Committee might wish to consider the inclusion of items under each heading as a whole. However, the Committee might wish to take separate decisions on certain items, where it was deemed appropriate, including in some cases the placement of items under appropriate headings.

9. The draft agenda contained 12 new items, namely items 41, 42, 114, 149 and 151 to 158, under various headings.

Paragraph 52

Items 1-8

10. **The Chairman** drew attention to paragraph 52 of the memorandum and to paragraph 3 of document A/BUR/61/1/Add.1. Items 1 to 8 were not under any heading. The General Assembly had already dealt with items 1 to 3. Items 4 to 8 related to organizational matters.

11. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly the inclusion in the agenda of items 1 to 8.

Heading A. Maintenance of international peace and security

Item 38. Question of the Malagasy islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India

12. **Mr. Tidjani** (Cameroon), supported by **Ms. Pierce** (United Kingdom), said that, following consultations with the representatives of France and Madagascar, and without prejudice to the positions of those two countries, his delegation proposed that the

Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that consideration of item 38 should be deferred to its sixty-second session.

13. *The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that consideration of item 38 should be deferred to its sixty-second session and that the item should be included in the provisional agenda for that session.*

Item 41. A proactive role for the United Nations in maintaining peace and security in East Asia

14. **The Chairman** said that the inclusion of item 41 had been proposed in document A/61/193 by a number of countries.

15. **Mr. Lukwiya** (Uganda) said that although General Assembly resolution 2758 (XXVI) on China's representation in the United Nations provided the Organization and its agencies with the legal basis and political principle for handling any Taiwan-related matter, regrettably, every year since 1993, the General Committee had had to spend time discussing the question.

16. Faced with a very heavy schedule, the General Assembly could use its time more productively by focusing on matters of vital importance to the global community, such as international peace and security and sustainable development.

17. In the spirit of United Nations reform and the revitalization of the General Assembly, as set forth in the World Summit Outcome, and based on the relevant provisions of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, his delegation wished to propose that the General Committee should apply the same model that it had followed the previous year in handling the proposal related to the Taiwan question.

18. Thus, the General Committee should consider items 41 and 155 of the draft agenda together in order to save General Assembly resources and ensure the best use of its time, and also to increase the Committee's efficiency.

19. Taking into account the clear position of the majority of Member States, there was no need for lengthy debate. Rather, there should be two speakers in favour and two against, and the duration of each statement should be no more than six minutes. After the statements were made, the Chairman would rule on whether or not to include the supplementary items in the agenda.

20. **Mr. Merores** (Haiti) said that the issue of the Organization's role in maintaining peace and security in East Asia transcended the question of the Republic of China (Taiwan), and that the two items should be considered separately.

21. **Mr. Wang** Guangya (China) expressed his delegation's support for the Ugandan proposal, which not only reflected the positions of most States Members of the United Nations and of the General Committee but was also consistent with efforts to reform and improve the working methods of the United Nations.

22. Depending on the exact intent of the remarks by the representative of Haiti, the Committee might wish to vote on the Ugandan proposal or adopt it without a vote.

23. **Mr. Shcherbak** (Russian Federation), **Mr. Adekanye** (Nigeria), **Mr. Labbé** (Chile), **Mr. Acharya** (Nepal), **Mr. Al-Otaibi** (Kuwait), **Mr. Jenie** (Indonesia), **Mr. Tidjani** (Cameroon), **Mr. Rinchhen** (Bhutan) and **Ms. Nyamudeza** (Zimbabwe) expressed support for the Ugandan proposal.

24. **Mr. Sow** (Guinea) supported the Ugandan proposal and praised China's efforts to support and protect the interests of the people of Taiwan.

25. **Mr. Al Bayati** (Iraq) also expressed support for the Ugandan proposal and for China's remarks thereon.

26. **Ms. Blum** (Colombia) said that her country was in favour of the Ugandan proposal and had always supported the one-China principle.

27. **The Chairman** said that she would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the proposal made by the representative of Uganda.

28. *It was so decided.*

29. **The Chairman** said that the representative of Gambia had asked to address the Committee on the matter in accordance with rule 43 of the rules of procedure.

30. *At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Grey-Johnson (Gambia) took a place at the Committee table.*

31. **Mr. Grey-Johnson** (Gambia) said that the Chairman had violated rule 43 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly by ignoring a written request submitted by his delegation, even though only a limited number of speakers would have spoken. He would reserve his right to return to the issue once a legal opinion on the Chairman's decision had been obtained. The issue in question affected an entire region, not only Taiwan. He had no doubt that his views were shared by other delegations.

32. **Mr. Wang** Guangya (China) said that his delegation firmly opposed inclusion of items 41 and 155 in the agenda of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. The raising of the question of Taiwan by a small number of countries constituted gross interference in China's internal affairs and a blatant violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and General Assembly resolution 2758 (XXVI). His Government had stated its position on the issue in a letter to the Secretary-General dated 15 August 2006.

33. There was only one China, and Taiwan was an inseparable part of China's territory. The "one-China" principle had been recognized by the overwhelming majority of Member States. The issue of China's representation in the United Nations had been resolved once and for all by the adoption of resolution 2758 (XXVI) in 1971. That resolution stated unequivocally that the representatives of the Government of the People's Republic of China were the only legitimate representatives of China to the United Nations. Since Taiwan was a part of China's territory, China's representation at the United Nations naturally included Taiwan. The so-called issue of "Taiwan's representation in the United Nations" therefore did not exist and, since 1993, the Committee had always refused to recommend its inclusion in the agenda of the General Assembly.

34. His Government had consistently adhered to the principle of peaceful reunification and "one country, two systems". It continued to promote the development of cross-Strait relations, including through mutual beneficial exchanges and consultations held on an equal footing. Recent efforts in that regard had been welcomed by Taiwan compatriots and widely approved by the international community. Positive steps had been made to curb the movement for "Taiwan independence" and there was increasing momentum for peace and stability. However, the Taiwan authorities had done their utmost to disrupt that process by accelerating secessionist activities. Chen Shui-bien had brazenly announced his decision to end the function of Taiwan's National Unification Council and cease the application of the "National Unification Guidelines" and had speeded up his efforts to push for "*de jure* Taiwan independence" through "constitutional re-engineering". If not curbed in time, such activities would cause serious tension in cross-Strait relations and threaten peace and stability in the region.

35. Respect for State sovereignty and territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of countries were important principles of the Charter. The question of Taiwan was a purely internal matter for China and should be settled jointly by the Chinese people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. No foreign force had the right to interfere. His delegation strongly urged the countries that supported inclusion of the item to do nothing further to encourage secessionist activities and offend the Chinese people. It appreciated the just position adopted by the vast majority of Member States.

36. **The Chairman** said that the representative of Nicaragua had asked to address the Committee on the matter in accordance with rule 43 of the rules of procedure.

37. *At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Sevilla Somoza (Nicaragua) took a place at the Committee table.*

38. **Mr. Sevilla Somoza** (Nicaragua) said that limiting debate on the item was not consistent with the Charter and was tantamount to censure. He would await a legal opinion on the matter before making further comments.

39. **Mr. Lukwiya** (Uganda) said that his Government's position in upholding a "one-China" policy and opposing inclusion of the items was supported by the majority of delegations. General Assembly resolution 2758 (XXVI) had clearly recognized the representatives of the People's Republic of China as the only legitimate representatives of China to the United Nations. The issue of Taiwan had been legally settled as far as the United Nations was concerned, and the United Nations had clearly pronounced Taiwan to be an inseparable part of China. There were thus no legal grounds for discussing an issue which was an internal matter for China. In the interest of the reform of the General Assembly and

given the Committee's procedural history, the Chairman was entitled to exercise the power vested in her by limiting debate on the item.

40. *The Committee decided not to recommend to the General Assembly the inclusion in the agenda of items 41 and 155.*

41. *Mr. Grey-Johnson (Gambia) and Mr. Sevilla Somoza (Nicaragua) withdrew.*

Item 42. Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

42. **The Chairman** said that the inclusion of item 42 had been proposed in document A/61/195 by Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

43. **Mr. Shcherbak** (Russian Federation), supported by **Mr. Acharya** (Nepal), **Mr. Wang** Guangya (China), **Mr. Al Bayati** (Iraq) and **Mr. Adekanye** (Nigeria) said that the item had been discussed in detail at the previous session. In the interest of optimizing the Committee's work, he thus proposed that only two delegations should speak in favour of inclusion of the item and only two speakers against, and that the duration of each statement should be more than six minutes.

44. The Chairman said that the representatives of Armenia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine had asked to address the Committee on the matter in accordance with rule 43 of the rules of procedure.

45. *At the invitation of the Chairman, Ms. Aghajanian (Armenia), Mr. Kryzhanivskyi (Ukraine) and Mr. Tulbure (Republic of Moldova) took places at the Committee table.*

46. **Mr. Shcherbak** (Russian Federation) recalled that the Committee had considered the issue of the inclusion of item 42 at the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, and that the GUAM States had not received the necessary support on that occasion. His delegation remained convinced that the proposal brought into question negotiating mechanisms whose potential had not yet been fully exhausted.

47. The successful resolution of the conflicts in the region depended on the efforts and the political will of those directly involved. Focused efforts continued to be made within existing international mechanisms and, as a result of those efforts, stability had been maintained and the situation in the region was not a threat to international peace and security. The continued success of the conflict-resolution process would depend on continued cooperation within existing mechanisms, including the General Assembly. His delegation would therefore vote against the inclusion of item 42, especially as the agenda for the Assembly at its sixty-first session was already very full.

48. **Mr. Kryzhanivskyi** (Ukraine), speaking on behalf of the GUAM States, namely Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, said that the request for the inclusion of item 42 fully complied with Article 11, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations.

49. As set forth in the explanatory memorandum attached as an annex to the letter sent to the Secretary-General by the Permanent Representatives of the four countries (A/61/195), the request had been made because of the dangerous situation in the area and because of the lack of progress in settling the protracted conflicts in the region.

50. Despite international mediation the conflicts had been running for over 15 years, and had had far-reaching negative implications for international peace and security, as well as for regional stability and development. They had also had a negative impact on the political, social and economic situation in those States and affected the lives of millions of people. There was no indication that the situation was improving.

51. The GUAM States were confident that consideration of the issue in the General Assembly would have a positive impact on the peace process. They certainly were not seeking to alter the format of the ongoing peace negotiations, but rather to bring the situation to the attention of a broader spectrum of the international community.

52. **Mr. Tulbure** (Republic of Moldova) said that the GUAM States had been trying for many years to win the inclusion of just one single item in the agenda of the General Assembly. Moreover, it was an item that would not involve sending peacekeeping troops or spending the Organization's resources, and it was an item that addressed protracted conflicts in a number of countries.

53. If the Organization was prepared to deny a Member State its fundamental right to be heard, he

wondered what the purpose of the Organization was at all. The United Nations was supposed to be about engaging in dialogue and discussion, about conflict resolution, and about providing assistance to those in need. He therefore called upon the Committee to discuss the issue, which was of vital interest to a considerable number of countries, and to adhere to the fundamental principles of the United Nations.

54. The international community should not wait for the protracted or "frozen" conflicts of the Black Sea region to deteriorate. It was better to be proactive than reactive, in order both to save resources and, more importantly, to save lives. Certain members of the Organization wished to prevent discussion and dialogue, and the result would be to threaten peace and stability in the region. The Committee was perfectly placed to prevent this from happening, and his delegation trusted in the wisdom of its members to take the appropriate action.

55. **Ms. Aghajanian** (Armenia) said that her delegation was unequivocally opposed to the inclusion of item 42 in the agenda of the General Assembly. The item sought to take a global approach to four different conflicts which had different origins and different legal and historical backgrounds and whose negotiation processes were at different stages.

56. The negotiation process for the conflict in the Nagorno Karabagh Republic was well under way, and the parties were working together with the mediators to find durable solutions, as reflected in the statement issued by the Ministerial Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on 6 December 2005.

57. The justifications given in the explanatory memorandum issued by the GUAM States were flawed. The difficulties in the negotiating process could certainly not be described as leading to the "prolongation" of the conflicts. Moreover, in recalling the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the authors of the proposal had demonstrated a one-sided approach and had failed to affirm all the fundamental principles involved. For example, the memorandum did not contain any reference to the inalienable right of peoples to self-determination, a principle which was crucial to conflict resolution.

58. The proposal reflected an attempt to create processes that were parallel to those which already existed under OSCE auspices, and were thus a further demonstration of Azerbaijan's continued efforts to affect the peace negotiations being carried out by the Minsk Group. That was totally unacceptable to her delegation.

59. Armenia recognized the right of any Member State to propose any item for inclusion in the agenda of the General Assembly. However, the introduction of a new agenda item, during the General Assembly's current revitalization process and despite the fact that the relevant issues could be discussed under at least three other agenda items, was a clear abuse of the Assembly's rules of procedure and was totally unacceptable.

60. The Committee decided not to recommend to the General Assembly the inclusion in the agenda of item 42.

61. *Ms. Aghajanian (Armenia), Mr. Kryzhanivskyi (Ukraine) and Mr. Tulbure (Republic of Moldova) withdrew.*

62. **Ms. Pierce** (United Kingdom) said that the United Kingdom was concerned at the lack of progress in resolving the conflicts in the Black Sea region. It strongly supported the work under way in the Minsk Group and the work being carried out with respect to Georgia by the Friends of the Secretary-General. The United Kingdom would have voted in favour of the proposal on the principle that the Committee should not try to prevent discussion in the General Assembly on an issue which other Member States had put forward. That did not mean that the United Kingdom would vote in favour of any subsequent resolution on the matter in the General Assembly. Any text resulting from the proposal would need to be considered on its merits.

63. **Mr. Wasilewski** (United States of America) said that, had it taken place, a vote on the inclusion of item 42 would have been purely procedural, and that the United States would have voted in favour of its inclusion. However, such a vote would have carried no implications for his delegation's substantive attitude with respect to any eventual resolution or debate in the plenary.

64. It was the Committee's well-established custom to respect and uphold the rights of all General

Assembly members to put forward matters of fundamental concern for transparent deliberation in the plenary, unless there were extraordinary opposing arguments. In the present case the Committee would have been considering a request that had been duly and jointly formulated, signed and submitted by the four Permanent Representatives of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova.

65. His Government was naturally aware of the argument that the initiative might negatively affect negotiations on the conflicts in the Black Sea region. It had paid proper attention to that risk, but did not judge it so grave as to justify depriving the four nations of their right to bring the issue before the General Assembly. However, his Government's policy in all substantive discussion of the issue would continue to be guided exclusively by that which it deemed could help, not harm, the peaceful resolution of the long-running conflicts in question.

66. *The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly in the agenda the inclusion of the items listed under heading A, taking into account the decisions taken regarding items 38, 41 and 42.*

Heading B. Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences

67. *The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly the inclusion in the agenda of the items listed under heading B.*

Heading C. Development of Africa

68. *The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly the inclusion in the agenda of the items listed under heading C.*

Heading D. Promotion of human rights

69. *The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly the inclusion in the agenda of the items listed under heading D.*

Heading E. Effective coordination of humanitarian assistance efforts

70. *The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly the inclusion in the agenda of the items listed under heading E.*

Heading F. Promotion of justice and international law

71. **Mr. Wenaweser** (Liechtenstein) said that his delegation, together with the delegation of Mexico, had proposed the inclusion of agenda item 152 under heading F.

72. **The Chairman** said that the Committee had taken note of the proposal of the representative of Liechtenstein.

73. *The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly the inclusion in the agenda of the items listed under heading F.*

Heading G. Disarmament

74. *The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly the inclusion in the agenda of the items listed under heading G.*

Heading H. Drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations

75. *The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly the inclusion in the agenda of the items listed under heading H.*

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.